Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*
Editorial Office 1710 Rhode Island Ave., N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D.C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066
VOL. VII, No. 20, *Issue Number* 329, MAY 17, 1950 ★ *Editor:* FRANK C. HANIGHEN

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WILL COMMUNISM CAPTURE ASIA?

by Hsiang Chi-p'ei

On May 8, Secretary Acheson pledged aid to Indo-China, stressing the necessity of developing "genuine nationalism" in the struggle to stop Communism in Southern Asia. Acheson's emphasis is significant. "Throughout all Asia", exclaims Chinese Communist leader Mao Tze-tung, "a mighty liberation movement has risen. All the forces of anti-imperialism are now uniting and developing."

This of course is an extension of the propaganda line that Mao employed so successfully against Chiang Kai-shek. "What is Chiang?" cried the Communist chorus. "He calls himself a Nationalist; but you can see for yourselves he is only the running dog of American imperialism." Unjust as it was as applied to Chiang, the "running dog" accusation was certainly among the factors that combined to defeat him.

To understand this it is necessary to realize that the dominant ideological influence in the Far East today is not Marxism but nationalism. On this point one might cite the testimony of General Carlos P. Romulo, Philippine delegate to the United Nations. "There are", he says, "three main drives behind the revolutionary changes sweeping across Asia. They are nationalism, Communism and regionalism. Of these nationalism is the oldest and still the most powerful."

No one understands the intensity of the nationalistic fever in Asia better than Mao Tze-tung himself. This Chinese realist has given what he calls a "new Asiatic form" to the gospel of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, which probably explains the illusion cherished by some Westerners that Mao is about to travel the road of Marshal Tito. All the evil attributed to capitalists in the traditional Marxist propaganda is ascribed by Mao to the British and American imperialists; the native capitalists are not attacked as such, but rather as instruments of alien oppressors. The recent riots at Saigon, Indo-China, protesting the U.S. military aid to Bao Dai's government were results of Communist agitations.

But this merely means that Mao at this point recognizes in "anti-imperialism" a more potent slogan than "class struggle". It does not indicate any wavering of his loyalty to Stalin, or any real deviation from the party line laid down by the Kremlin. In structure and discipline the Chinese Communist Party is like Communist parties the world over; that is to say the Russian Communist Party serves as its model and

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guide. Again and again in his theoretic and polemical writings Mao Tze-tung has emphasized to his followers that "China's revolution is part of the world revolution". The sudden enthusiasm of the Chinese Communists for the independence and sovereignty of all Eastern peoples is, therefore, one of those tactical diversions whereby the party seeks to capture a pre-existing movement and to exploit it to its own purposes.

II

The Communist program for Southeast Asia was disclosed at the Congress of the Indian Communist Party at Calcutta in February, 1948, attended by delegates from all the Oriental countries. The program admits of certain tactical modifications to adapt it to different local conditions. But the main purpose is everywhere the same -- to exploit and capture the nationalist movements and to use them as the means of overthrowing the existing governments.

In Malaya, the Communists are leading an insurrectionary agitation for the expulsion of the British. In Burma they have made vast propagandistic capital of the Karen insurrections. In Siam they are behind the "Free Thai". In Indo-China they are at war with the French. In Indonesia they are fighting both the Dutch and the forces of the new Indonesian Republic. In the new Republic of India, where the triumph of nationalism is already complete, they are attacking the government through the trade unions and the organization of economic discontent.

In none of these countries are the Communists numerous enough, or sufficiently entrenched in vital positions, to attempt a complete seizure of power without material assistance from the outside. With the victory of the Chinese Reds, however, they are confident that this assistance will be forthcoming. Nor is there confidence without reason; for the Chinese Communist Party long ago formally adopted and announced the policy of nan-chin, or southward advance.

The relationship between the Chinese Communists and the parties of Southeast Asia is intimate and of long standing. The Chinese party stands in the relation of a mother institution: many of the original missionaries, propagandists and organizers were provided from its ranks.

In 1937, before China had begun the war of resistance against the Japanese invaders, Chinese Reds entered Malaya to begin intensive propaganda, first among the Chinese population and then among the natives. They were not for a time very successful, and the agitators were driven underground by the native police. But after the Chinese Communists had joined the Nationalists in the war against the Japanese, the Reds in Malaya emerged from hiding to organize "patriotic" public meetings in

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support of the common cause. Their real purpose was to build enough Communist cells to give them a permanent foothold in the peninsula. The strongest of the Communist military forces in South Asia are those of Indo-China under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, founder of the Republic of Viet Nam, and General Vo Nguyen Gap. These forces are now in control of most of the coastal regions of Tonkin and Annam provinces and the French have already been driven out of much of the hinterland. Ho Chi Minh is now more than likely to invite Chinese assistance in completing the French discomfiture.

III

Of all the Asiatic countries, India seems to afford the soil most favorable to the seeds of Communism. Hence it is in no way strange that Communist missionaries have been active there since the early days of the Third International.

Their work has been simplified by the fearful miseries of this overpopulated country, where famine is endemic and diseases are rife, where a majority of the inhabitants cannot afford more than one full meal a day, and where the gravest social injustices are perpetuated by the caste system. The condition of the Indian masses has grown worse rather than better with the recent rapid industrialization of the country. Now an already unbearable congestion has been further aggravated by the influx of homeless and impoverished Hindu refugees from Pakistan, with which India was on the verge of hostilities that the Communists would certainly have welcomed.

Among the Indian peasants the Communists have posed, as in China, as "agrarian reformers". This propoganda has been enormously effective, for a great part of the soil of India, especially in the South, is in the possession of great landowners, and the tenant labor is harshly exploited. In addition to this peasant proletariat there is the rapidly growing "intellectual proletariat", consisting largely of disillusioned university graduates and students without prospect of employment. Among this element of the population the Communists have made rapid gains.

Turning from the mainland toward the Pacific, we find a strong Communist State established in North Korea, in direct contact with the Communists of Manchuria and openly preparing to extend its control over the whole peninsula. In the islands of Indonesia a Communist uprising has not been rendered more remote by the agreement reached last December at the Hague between the Netherlands and the Indonesian Republic. When this agreement came up for discussion before the General Assembly of the United Nations, Andrei Galagan, the Ukranian representative on the

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Security Council, announced that one unit of the Indonesian forces was already in revolt against the Republic.

With regard to the external Communist encroachment the situation of Japan is not dissimilar from that of India. Within Japan itself, Communism is a powerful and ever-active force, notwithstanding the vigilance of the Occupation authorities.

Throughout the war in the Far East a group of Japanese Communists was established in Yennan, China, under the title of the Japanese People's Emancipation League. Here they busied themselves with post-war plans, in anticipation of a Japanese military defeat. The league was under the direction of Susomo Okano, a Moscow-trained revolutionary, and for long an important figure in the hierarchy of the Comintern. After the surrender he returned to Japan, and the Japanese Communist Party, which had been driven underground by the Imperial police, was reorganized under a triumvirate consisting of Okano, Kyuichi Jokuda and Yoshio Shiga, and a drive launched for recruits, who have been numerous.

IV

In 1947 the Japanese Communists felt themselves strong enough to make plans for paralyzing the economic life of Japan. The plans for "direct action" to take over industry were frustrated by the Occupation authorities. Since then, however, the Communist forces have grown steadily stronger, and the militant character of the party has been enhanced by the addition of carefully selected, indoctrinated and trained war prisoners repatriated from Russia.

While the American forces remain in Japan, a Communist seizure of power there is of course out of the question. That will not necessarily be so if a treaty of peace is concluded and Japanese independence restored. Meanwhile, one may safely predict that the plots and strategems of the Japanese Communists, co-ordinated with the Communist activities elsewhere in Asia, will provide an increasingly painful series of headaches for the Occupation.

So an objective survey sharpens the question of whether the whole of East Asia is destined to fall into Communist hands, thereby giving the Lords of the Kremlin domination over two-thirds of the earth and more than four-fifths of its inhabitants. The best answer that can be made is that the Communists themselves are confident of it.

Hsiang Chi-p'ei, a young Chinese scholar, has taught at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Notre Dame.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 20

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO JUN 1

By Frank C. Hanighen May 17, 1950

FRANCE AND GERMANY: The proposal of the French to pool their steel and coal resources with those of Germany constitutes a move of high statesmanship and offers promise for a new, united Western Europe. Many details will have to be clarified and the French Foreign Minister must convincingly dispel sincere fears that the arrangement may work out as a real cartel. But the move comes as an excellent psychological tonic for a weary Europe. Two aspects are important: (1) The proposal is concrete, and on the economic plane. Too many affirmations have been merely ideological oratory. (2) It comes from France. In these columns, in the past year, we have expressed belief that there has been an important, although not vocal, sentiment in France for ending the old conflict with Germany. Our correspondent, Bertrand de Jouvenel, has treated the German question with what we believed was the authentic voice of France. This voice has now become official, with results of happy augury for the world.

As to the economic details of the Schuman offer, there was one important sentence in the communique which to our knowledge has entirely escaped the notice of American writers: "Europe, with its resources thus increased [by the Schuman plan], will be able to pursue one of its essential tasks: the development of the African Continent." It may be revealed that, behind the scenes, there have been under way for some time studies of plans for a joint Franco-German development of French North Africa. French companies have been exploring such projects; German economists have been scrutinizing the matter with fascinated hope; and even some American financial interests have considered the underwriting of some such scheme.

French experts feel that France would need the strength of German technical know-how and machinery adequately to tackle such a project. German industrialists -- particularly in the cement and machinery business -- have been keenly interested. German and French economists have speculated that such a collaboration would tend to turn much of the interest of German industry westwards, rather than to Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. Irrigation and exploitation of the agricultural possibilities of French North Africa have been outlined as important objectives -- and some Germans have seen in these a prospect of North African agricultural commodities relieving the West German food situation. Hydro-electric dams, roads, railroad expansion and mineral exploitation figure in the picture. Although such development would be distinctly of a long-term character, mention of it definitely widens the horizon opened up by the historic Schuman proposal.

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TYDINGS-ISM AND McCARTHY-ISM: The battle of the files continues. The Administration cautiously releases some selected files, under strict limitations, to the Senate Committee where Senator Tydings effectively obscures them. McCarthy roars that these files have been well edited before released -- which may well be true. A retired General the other day remarked to us that in the Defense Department the files on individual officers were rigorously kept from any editing; and that it is known this practice has not been strictly observed in the State Department.

We have often wondered, since the Affaire McCarthy began, why the GOP did not embarrass the Democrats by recalling some aspects of the oil scandals of the Twenties. This gave us an idea and we phoned former Senator Burton K. Wheeler, a Democrat, in those days a leader in the Teapot Dome, Elk Hills, and other investigations, which led to the resignations of two GOP Cabinet members, Harry Daugherty and Albert Fall. Wheeler remarked: "One thing I note in this McCarthy matter.

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The Democrats keep saying that McCarthy started his muckraking with little or no evidence. Well, I must confess that I started my charges against the Republican Administration, in 1923, with little or no evidence. Once I got started, the evidence began to roll in."

Wheeler went on to point out a contrast -- that President Coolidge took a very different attitude toward the demands of himself and Senator Tom Walsh for opening of Government files. Wheeler referred us to a statement he made, while still a Senator, on the floor on November 9, 1945. Here it is from the Congressional Record: "I call attention to the fact that in the Daugherty investigation I sent for files myself, I asked for files from the Attorney General of the United States, Mr. Daugherty. He refused to give them to me. . . . When he did so, the President of the United States, Mr. Coolidge, called him in and asked for his resignation, and Mr. Daugherty was eliminated from the office of Attorney General. After that time, when the new Attorney General was appointed, every single file I ever asked for, as a minority member of the committee, was furnished to me." So far as we have seen, Senator Ferguson is the only Republican who has tossed these facts in the Administration's face, and precious little publicity has he got for it.

The above statements by one of the leading characters in the political drama of the Twenties prompted us to go back and consult a copy of the Democratic Platform in the Presidential campaign of 1924. Here's how the Democrats said it then: "The nation has been appalled by the revelations of political depravity which have characterized the conduct of public affairs. We arraign the Republican Party for attempting to limit inquiry into official delinquencies and to impede, if not to frustrate, the investigations to which in the beginning the Republican Party and leaders assented, but which later they regarded with dismay. . . . Such are the urgencies of partisan politics that Republican leaders are teaching the strange doctrine that public censure should be directed against those who expose crime rather than against criminals who have committed the offenses."

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EXECUTIVE DIGNITY: Edna Lonigan comments from Capitol Hill. The State Department persists in the curious attitude that it is duty bound to defend its employees and advisers when they are accused by Members of Congress. If a policeman is accused of neglect of duty, he is suspended, until his record is cleared. If a clerk takes a few dollars from the Treasury, he is out until all doubts are removed. But State Department experts who have been accused of slanting American policy to help Soviet world conquest are not suspended. On the contrary they are turned into heroes, with all the resources of a huge Government department mobilized for their defense.

The State Department has opened the confidential files, which it refused to give to the Senate, to help John Stewart Service (of Amerasia fame) prepare for his hearing, according to the Scripps Howard chain and INS. Both of these press organizations reported that State Department employees were assigned to declassify the secret documents Service might need. The poor Treasury clerk under charges would, even if innocent, have to prepare his own defense, hire his own lawyers, and type his own letters.

Nor is that all. State has also issued a letter to 500 newspaper editors "answering" charges against its employees and consultants. This letter violated the usual proprieties of departmental conduct. The State Department's loyalty is to the American people, not to Philip Jessup. It has no duty to interfere in debates and investigations in Congress. It has no right to make ex parte statements in lieu of evidence. It is not proper to try matters of Congressional criticism in the press. Time was when Government departments would have thought it beneath their dignity to defend themselves by a public display.

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GUILT BY ASSOCIATION: Plain Talk (May) has an excellent article on the "guilt by association" matter, clearing away some of the mists which have invaded otherwise clear minds. But the piece which has particularly riveted our attention is one by C. P. Ives in the Baltimore Sun (May 15) -- a paper which can hardly be accused of "red baiting". Mr. Ives, discussing Justice Jackson's recent opinion in the Communist oath case, says: "Take, for instance, the uproar made about 'guilt by association' said to be imputed in some Congressional hearings. But guilt by association is perfectly respectable law, known to all lawyers as the doctrine of conspiracy. 'There has', says Justice Jackson, 'recently entered the dialectic of politics a cliché used to condemn application of this conspiracy principle to Communists. 'Guilt by association' is an epithet frequently used and little explained, except that it is generally accompanied by another slogan, 'guilt is personal'. Of course it is: but personal guilt may be incurred by joining a conspiracy. That act of association makes one responsible for the acts of others committed in pursuance of the association. . . .'"

Mr. Ives pays his respects to another false notion disseminated by so-called liberals. "The point is", he says, ". . . that Congress in legislating for the community is necessarily exempt from the strait rules which govern judicial punishment of the individual for crime. Abuse of this Congressional scope by irresponsible Members of Congress is monstrous. But it is a grave misapprehension of popular government to argue, as many people do, that Congress should be held to standards as strict, or, indeed, stricter, than those in court.

"Another verbal tag much utilized by innocents and their manipulators is 'hearsay testimony'." Ives recalls that Budenz' testimony before Congress was denounced as "hearsay", but that Budenz testified in pretty much the same way in the Draper-Adler libel case in Connecticut without objection from the Draper-Adler counsel. "The explanation is that when Mr. Budenz testified in court and Congress on what was within his own personal knowledge -- namely how he as an editor of the Daily Worker operated the Communist paper -- he was not reciting mere hearsay." And Ives finds it "unusually fatuous even in a 'liberal', for Senator Chavez to suggest the other day that patriots should be spared the trouble of such vigilance by foregoing, in the defense of the Republic, that use of informers which is routine in all lesser police work." The Ives conclusion to his article is memorable: "It is constitutional to defend constitutionalism."

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NEVER A DULL MOMENT DEPARTMENT: Whatever brickbats have been thrown at Eleanor Roosevelt, we cannot recall that she has ever been accused of irony or of using understatement with malicious intent. This makes all the more tantalizing her remarks ("My Day", April 21, 1950) about Averell Harriman's speech at the New York State Democratic Committee dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria: "Mr. Harriman", said she, "was the main speaker of the evening and I was impressed by the great improvement he has made, both in the way he delivered his speech and in the content of it."

---- President Truman's speech to the Federal Bar Association, on April 24, on Communism in this country and what his administration has done about it, has been pretty thoroughly combed for comment. But there was one dodge in it, so threadbare that we never expected to see it used again. "They [the Communists]", said Truman, "have been steadily losing ground since their peak in 1932, at the depth of our greatest depression, when they polled the largest number of votes in their history." This classic piece of baloney is the more flavorsome when we recall that it was not until 1933-34 that the Reds began their systematic campaign to infiltrate the Federal Government.

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Book Events

Politics, Trials and Errors, by the Rt. Hon. Lord Hankey, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company. $2.50. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

Mr. Hanson Baldwin, whose study of the blunders of the political and military leaders of the recent war was reviewed in this space last week, decided that the egregious error had been the formula of Unconditional Surrender as the prime condition of peace. With this judgment Lord Hankey heartily agrees; for in addition to all the evil consequences traced by Mr. Baldwin, the Casablanca formula paved the way for the great international war crimes trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo, which could not have been possible under a peace by negotiation and treaty. These trials of the conquered by their conquerors were a fateful departure from the usages of civilized nations and may have seriously, if not fatally, damaged the traditional forms of justice everywhere; and the precedents established by them may one day be turned against those who were persuaded by passion or propaganda to approve them. At best they have grievously impaired the moral position of the Western Powers, as is shown by Lord Hankey in an ironical footnote concerning the British protest to Bulgaria over the conviction and condemnation of the peasant leader Nikola Petkov. One of the grounds of protest was the injustice of permitting Petkov to be tried by judges who were, like his prosecutors, members of the Communist Party. This point, however, was wholly invalidated by the fact that at the time of the protest British judges at Tokyo were participating in the trial of their vanquished enemies of war.

Lord Hankey's book is not as well organized as Mr. Montgomery Belgion's analysis of Victors' Justice, and has not the dramatic interest of Mr. A. Frank Reel's narrative of The Case of General Yamashita; but it is immensely valuable for its documentation and its historical approach. Lord Hankey by virtue of his long association with successive British governments speaks as one who has lived on the inside of political and diplomatic affairs. He was one of the first public figures in England, as Senator Taft was here, openly to attack the wisdom of the trials and the propriety of the procedure. But evidently many British Politicians privately shared his misgivings. He mentions an aide-mémoire presented by Sir Alexander Cadogan to Judge Rosenman in April, 1945, more or less reiterating the prophetic objections that were raised a quarter century before by Lord Balfour to the proposal that the Kaiser and other German war leaders be tried before an Allied tribunal. This proposal, vigorously promoted by Lloyd George, and made the leading issue of the famous Khaki election, was actually adopted at the Versailles Conference. It came to nothing, however, when the government of the Netherlands bluntly refused a demand to deliver the royal refugee into Allied custody. Cadogan's communication, says Lord Hankey, "was not at all to the liking of the United States", where preparations for an elaborate trial were already in progress. The British thereupon backed down and agreed to collaborate, which Lord Hankey considers a sorry mistake indeed. "Nothing", he says, "was lost by the abandonment of the trials in 1920", and nothing, he insists, but good would have resulted had the scheme been abandoned in 1945.

In 1920 Balfour had suggested that the trial of the Kaiser might drag on for many years. This would certainly have been the case at Nuremberg and Tokyo had the defendants been permitted to make a real defense against the charge of conspiracy to wage aggressive war. It would have been necessary at Nuremberg to review the whole treaty of Versailles and the whole course of subsequent European history. At Tokyo it would have been necessary to review the policy of the Western Powers in the Pacific from 1853. Thus only on the principle that the evidence must conform to the contemplated verdict was it possible to expedite the proceedings.

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European Supplement *to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 20

UNIVERSITY REC June 1 1950

By Bertrand de Jouvenel PARIS -- May, 1950

TOTAL DIPLOMACY: Recent elucidations of the American attitude in world affairs are of course widely discussed over here: I shall attempt to outline the directions of thought they suggest. We are quite confident that the great Republic will defend sovereign democratic nations which are of a mind to defend themselves. There is some uncertainty about American reaction to a possible subversion of democracy by democratic means: for instance, if in France or Italy the Communists lifted themselves into power thanks to a Popular Front, and then proceeded to follow the pattern established in Czechoslovakia. But this hurdle is nowhere in sight, and increasing political discrimination against the Communists is held, rightly or wrongly, to make such an event improbable.

Why then do we still feel somewhat in the dark about the American attitude? A firm stand taken in the case of those nations which are run on something like the same principles as the United States leaves unsettled the line of conduct in that vast area of the world where the Soviets do not rule and where the democratic principles are not in force -- in the colonies.

The political sympathies of the American people and the national interest of the U.S. coincide up to a point. Upholding the democracies of Western Europe is justified under the heading of containment and under the heading of mutual help between kindred-minded peoples. It is both politically useful and sentimentally satisfactory. But the coincidence does not hold everywhere. It does not hold in southeastern Asia where the colonial Powers should be backed under the heading of containment but cannot be backed under the heading of political sympathy. American policy has sought to overcome this difficulty by pressing for the grant of independence to these peoples. Self-governing, they would henceforth deserve help; and their spirit of nationalism once satisfied would become an obstacle to Communist progress instead of being used as a powerful weapon of Communist propaganda.

This is where European specialists -- I am definitely not one -- take issue with the American policy. They point to the fact that Chiang Kai-shek's government, once considered the model of sovereign democratic government in Asia, failed to withstand the Communist challenge and was abandoned by the United States on grounds of weakness and inefficiency. They contend that no independent government set up or to be set up in southern Asia will do as well as Chiang. They hold that the existing elites of the region are of a purely literary bent with no experience and no sense of organization; that they are widely separated from the masses by the nonexistence of a solid, practical lower middle class in which lies the strength of democracies; that they are "Kerenskys".

These experts further give warning that the economic situation of regions achieving political independence must degenerate (thus giving the Communists a wider opening) -- because the "economic-cultural bases of foreign investment" must disappear with the passing of European rule. No foreign private capital, they say, will come into the country, under nationalist governments openly desirous of nationalizing foreign investments sooner or later. It will then fall to Congress and the American taxpayer to provide the capital. If not, these countries will have to raise themselves by their own economic bootstraps. The formation of indigenous capital by State extortion is precisely the same economic policy as that of the Soviets: and this Communist policy will appear as the only resource.

Such is the thesis of European experts who conclude that the United States has the choice of backing a liberalized colonialism or of letting such regions fall to Communism. They point out that the type of Communism evolved by Soviet Russia is

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precisely suitable to underdeveloped regions. Whether their general argument is right or wrong I am quite incompetent to say. One can well imagine a third solution emerging: that the United States would have to step in to bolster up these vital and vast areas and would assume in effect joint protectorates with the previous colonial Powers. While this solution seems very far from the wishes of the American people, there is a certain determinism in the cold war.

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CONSEQUENCES OF THE DEFENSIVE: Any further subjection of a free people, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, is sentimentally unbearable. But also from the point of view of strategic security, any further expansion of Soviet imperialism no matter where, would be too dangerous to be acceptable. The first point leads in a direction which is a good one from every point of view: to the constant strengthening of the ties between the U.S. and other Western free communities.

The second point, however, leads us to ground on which we may feel reluctant to tread. Thus, to stop Soviet expansion the American Republic may be called upon to bolster up political and social situations which do not have the support of American public opinion. Suppose that the Argentine were threatened by a clearly Stalinist rising supplied with weapons from Moscow. Would not the American Government intervene? Now let us move our supposition to Spain: presumably the decision would be the same. Finally, let us move it to South Africa. Again the national interest would call for the same decision, though in this case public opinion, one presumes, would not stand for it.

Thus the logic of a defensive cold war would seem to draw the American Republic into the role of keeper of the whole of the non-Soviet world, calling the Americans, for strategic reasons, to the defense of institutions averse to their principles. There is quite a problem here: nor is it the only one posed by the defensive cold war. The gradual and reluctant discovery by the West that Communism can lead to national disloyalty is setting us slowly but surely upon a course most dangerous to civil liberties. If a declared Communist is a potential traitor we must discriminate against him in advance, which is contrary to democratic equality. If there are undeclared Communists they have to be smoked out -- which leads to indefinite expansion of police activities and indeed of neighborly suspicion. Nor is there any point at which the demands of security can be safely stopped: consider the case of scientists. If M. Joliot-Curie as a Communist was unreliable in the case of atomic research, is it not to be feared that he will take his knowledge across to the enemy? Shall we then deprive him of his passport, and, as a further precaution, of his liberty? We shall find ourselves getting to the concentration camp stage if we are not careful. All through our liberal West there runs a justified fear of what this "situation of distrust" may lead us to.

Indeed, distrust is the poison sprinkled abroad by Soviet Russia as her chief weapon in the cold war. It is doubtful whether she is best served by the actual treasons of some or by our natural reactions to them: we are induced to swathe ourselves in precautions most inimical to the spirit of democracy which is a spirit of trust. We lose either way: on the score of security, or on the score of liberty.

We are here witnessing a phenomenon probably without precedent. Always before in history, nonviolent competition between a system of freedom and a system of despotism has resulted in the subversion of the latter. There is no sign of this at present and there are a few signs of the reverse process. Is it not, one wonders, because we regard liberty as calling for protection and forget that it should be used as a weapon? We would be winning the cold war if we were maneuvering Russian despotism into granting more freedom, which must destroy it. Instead we are being maneuvered into increasing precautions which must weaken our spirit and appeal.

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THE MILKMAN'S KNOCK: Pessimism on Western prospects is seen to be out of place if one recalls the progress made up to date. In the first stage of the post-war era Europe's economic difficulties were brilliantly overcome. In the second stage, military security of Western Europe is attended to; here we are still in the stage of fictions politely called blueprints.

But when stubborn opposition to the reinstatement of Germany shall have been overcome we will soon be able to make a stand. The third stage consists in winning back to the Western ideal of liberty those of us who have crossed over to the despotic welfare ideal of Moscow: and simultaneously in carrying the ideological fight into the opposing camp.

This obviously could not be done as long as Western Europe was pervaded by a sneaking sense of moral inferiority towards the Soviets. A similar admiration for the loathsome institutions of Sparta broke the spirit of Athens. It is not enough that the great majority of Europeans should have come to a saner view of the Stalinian system. This alone does not provide the motive power for a moral offensive. You cannot win people over to a way of life of which you are not proud. And while Europeans do fear the Soviet way of life they do not treasure their own.

You would think that at least those countries which have been occupied would have gained a vivid appreciation of the blessings of liberty. It was a very apt phrase, and full of memories to many of us, that of Bidault, when he said: "Liberty consists in knowing that knocking at seven in the morning means the milkman." Strangely enough, however, obsession with the malformations of Society seems to have immediately superseded naive enjoyment of freedom. The strange fancy has struck root that one's own and other people's lives are not what they should be because of some defect in the social structure; and pottering about with it by law-making has improved nobody's temper.

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NEO-ROMANTICISM: It is in order here to mention the destructive influence of neo-romanticism. Practically the whole army of new authors has flung itself -- following Claudel, Gide and Bernanos -- into an attack on social morality. "Respectable" behavior is not sincere, authentic, not a genuine assertion of the individual, says the atheist; not the true way to salvation, echoes the Catholic. Quite so, but nonetheless such behavior is very desirable and quite necessary to the functioning of a free society.

There is a current belief abroad that this new generation of writers champions a free society because, after a spell of sympathy, it has come out against Communism. What is not clearly understood is the cause of this revulsion. The assault upon accepted standards of morality first referred itself to vague revolutionary standards. But it was only the clandestineness and violence of revolutionary action, the mere appearance which seduced our authors; and they dropped the revolutionary standards when they realized these were even more binding than bourgeois standards. What was the use of denouncing a very elastic gold standard to fall into the subjection of a strict silver standard?

For the neo-romantics, some of whom call themselves existentialists, the individual's personality is to be built up by a succession of deeds, arbitrarily chosen independently from any pre-existing scale of values and from any relation to a general picture of the universe which cannot be formed, as there is no meaning to be sought and recourse to reason henceforth is absurd. This gives us some quite unaccountable heroes. They must act because their own action is their only certitude about a universe dissolved into fog and foul air. But their action must not be logically motivated because then it would be submission to a set of illusions. Don't ask me why.

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The influence of such literature on the cultured classes of Society is far more unsettling than the influence of gangster films on juveniles. Real people tend to see their quite banal surroundings, problems and neighbors in the nightmarish light of existentialism. Nothing, they think, is amenable to reason: and finally their conduct is quite unreasonable. This is a distinct setback to the free society: freedom and reason hang together.

In the name of art, this demoralizing literature (intelligently studied by Alberès, L'Aventure Intellectuelle au XXe siècle) commands awed respect (see, however, Marcel Aymé's amusing Le Confort Intellectuel) and the Communists enjoy almost alone the privilege of condemning it in the name of common sense and common decency. Far away are the times when advanced literature went hand in hand with Communism. Now a Communist author has to be more conventional in subject and tone than if he wrote for a children's magazine under strict conservative management. See Aragon's total transformation.

The great theme is the story of The Good Little Communist. We have seen it treated ad nauseam on the occasion of Thorez' fiftieth anniversary. Here is the good little boy in person. He was so good, this child of the coal mines, that the people of France contributed to give him one of the costliest cars in the world, a Delahaye, and on his fiftieth birthday presents came for him from all points of the country. Those who mock such sentimentality go far astray: this is the natural bent of popular feeling. The strength of Stalinism lies precisely in its espousal of all the means to social cohesion which advanced bourgeois society has successively discarded.

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THE LIBERALS CHOOSE A LEADER: Attention has been called here often enough to the fact that liberal individualism, the spirit of which is undoubtedly reviving in Europe, finds itself politically unrepresented, the post-war political pattern on the Continent being composed of the collectivist trio: Communists, Socialists, Christian Socialists. Parties which stand at least in name for liberal individualism are not benefiting from its revival, and still faring badly; to wit, the Belgian Liberal Party shaken almost apart by the Leopold crisis. The one country where this position is really represented by a dynamic and rising group is France. Elections now would make the Radical and near-Radical coalition (dubbed Rassemblement des Gauches) one of the most powerful groups in the Assembly. But elections are entirely precluded by the common interest of the oligopolists -- Communists, Socialists and MRP. It is even rumored that they hope to postpone elections beyond the constitutional term next year, so that they should coincide with the end of Marshall aid, a mere pretext of course to put off the verdict of popular opinion.

However, in the meantime the Rassemblement des Gauches is preparing for battle. Sometime ago it chose a young secretary general, Jean Paul David, who means business. And just now it has elected as its president the former Premier Edouard Daladier, who has staged a great and significant comeback since the Liberation. The Communists wanted him ousted from public life because it was under his Premiership at the outset of the war that strong police measures were taken against them in view of their defeatist activities; and that their representatives were unseated by the House for the same reason. The Communists brought all their batteries to bear against him. Indeed under Vichy, when he was imprisoned, they had offered to testify against him. After the Liberation the fact that he was a signatory of Munich (because, as many times explained, he was well aware of the state of the French Army) was invoked against him. Many other politicians of the Third Republic were stopped by a far lesser barrage. But he kept on pressing back with quite remarkable courage. And now he stands in a position of real parliamentary power.

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